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## Chapter 16: The Development of Towns in the North

C Pamela Graves\*

### Introduction

This paper will consider future possible research topics for urban archaeology in the North of England. Although entitled 'the development of towns', *development*, in the sense of a chronological evolution features as only one theme of interest in this paper. Whilst it is still necessary to discover the topographical spread and contraction of towns, I would suggest that we can understand this concept of development better if social issues are integral to our investigations. I suggest that fruitful research aims can be achieved if we analyse the town as a social environment, and ask questions of what the medieval town-dweller experienced in their occupation of this urban space. The point is not to try to reconstruct 'ideas inside people's heads' (Barrett 1987, 471 *contra* Hodder 1986, see 1991 edition), for this insight would be available only through unique documents, and even then questionable as an objective. Rather, the point is to analyse the town as a material environment, comprised of buildings, public, private or differently defined spaces, in which material objects were produced, used, discarded or exchanged, and in which specific social identities were created. We may ask *how* these social identities were created, and whose interests they served? By taking a material approach to the experience of urban social life we can ask who created the environments; who had authority and the resources to create them? We can ask how some aspects or functions of the material environment might change through time or be deployed in different ways by different groups? Consequently, we can identify sources of potential conflict in the control and use of the urban environment: instances of subversion of norms; and change in the construction of social knowledge through time.

Martin Carver has suggested that the townscape, as an archaeological phenomenon, is a palimpsest of political choices through time: 'the preferred corporate investment of the day, expressed as streets broad and narrow, monuments, refuse disposal services,' amongst other things (Carver 1993, 4). To these might be added the control of waste property and gardens, even perhaps particular imports. Carver continues with the opinion that, 'The investment in turn

reflects the political mood of the community,' (Carver 1993, 4). I suggest that much of the work which is carried out in future in towns in the North of England can be related to major themes of political and corporate investment, for example, of lordship; how institutions like the Church penetrate the everyday lives of townspeople and are reproduced by them; how urban communities enfranchise themselves and achieve and express this in material terms.

In 1993 the CBA Urban Research Committee published the recommendations of a colloquium held at the University of Durham on urban themes AD 1000-1600. In 1994, a synthetic paper on medieval and later towns by John Schofield was included in the RAI special volume *Building on the Past* (Schofield 1994b). Most of that paper forms the final chapter of the Schofield and Vince volume on *Medieval Towns* (1994). Olivier 1996 and Williams 1997 both have implications for the study of urban archaeology. In the course of this paper I will make reference to these documents.

### Research on medieval urban origins

I have not structured this paper in terms of the chronological development of towns in the North, but origins are a good point at which to start. Since the location of archaeological excavation has been defined largely by threat, the picture it has provided of origins remains partial, and it is unclear in some cases whether we are seeing settlement continuity or disjuncture. It is not that I think the definition of a town is important, but I do think one of the exciting possibilities which towns in the North hold for us is the exploration of the diversity of borough foundation, in particular, the subject of lordship in its effects and challenges.

In Newcastle, the discovery of an extensive cemetery dating from *circa* AD 700 and continuing in use up to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, after the foundation of the castle presents us with the problem of where the dead who filled this cemetery originally worked and lived. Although there are slight remains of sub-Roman activity and pottery within the area of the later medieval Castle, no post-Roman, pre-AD 1080 finds have been located beyond the Castle spur. All considerations of the name 'Monkchester',

\*Address: Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE

the identification of Pandon with Bede's *Ad Murum* and the tradition of a royal Saxon palace there (cf Brand 1789, 383), or the possibility of early settlement around St Andrew's church, remain speculation. Four sherds of residual Saxon pottery dating to between the 7th and 9th centuries were found in later contexts in Oakwellgate, Gateshead, across the River Tyne (Nolan 2000, 23). Of as much importance, however, would be the wider social and political context of the region in which we could place it. Following Eric Cambridge's study of the early ecclesiastical organisation of County Durham (1984), may the curious circumstance of Newcastle's four churches be explained in a pre-Conquest minster and dependent chapels? In this respect, the archaeological patterning of Carlisle's pre-Norman settlement which seems to have been focused around the churches of St Mary and St Cuthbert is well served by the advent of Summerson's excellent two volume *Medieval Carlisle* (1993) produced by the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, and Angus Winchester's *Landscape and Society* (1987). McCarthy (1999b) has reviewed the evidence for early medieval Carlisle and posed a number of remaining research questions. By the late eleventh century there seems to have been more than one settlement, with a complex pattern of tenure which may be related to the splitting of a single lordship into several estates. The twelfth century borough developed from the threefold allocations to the castle, the priory and the townspeople.

The results of excavations carried out in Hexham, Northumberland (Cambridge and Williams 1995), would seem to set the future investigation of the town's development in terms of the competing jurisdictions of the Priory of St Andrew, and the Archbishops of York. This would accord with Tom Corfe's suggestion that the burgesses of Hexham had little control over the creation of their town, perhaps in contrast to neighbouring Corbridge (Corfe 1995).

In Darlington Market Place, County Durham, excavations in 1994 located successive ditches which have been interpreted as boundary ditches to a churchyard that lay to the west (Adams, Carne and Bosveld unpub). As the churchyard expanded to the east, the boundary ditches were recut further eastward each time. Carne and Adams have concluded that the graveyard must belong to a church that pre-dated the late twelfth century foundation to the east, and they suggest

that this may have been a Saxon church (Adams, Carne and Bosveld unpub, 16). This raises, once more, an older question as to the existence of a late Saxon burh or at least the connection between Saxon churches and market places. It has been suggested that the feasts of the Church year created 'urban moments' by attracting crowds and commerce (Morris 1987, 190) in places whose settled population was otherwise sparse, and in which trade occurred only intermittently (Wood 1986; Sawyer 1981, 160-1). Was this a deliberate, and therefore politically symbolic, juxtaposition or replacement of churches by the Norman Bishop le Puiset, of the sort now familiar to us elsewhere? A well known example was Bishop Flambard's clearance of the houses on the peninsula in Durham to create the *placea*, as recorded by Symeon of Durham (Bonney 1990, 26 and 36; Arnold 1882 vol. 1, 140). Excavations at 61-3 Saddler Street, Durham, revealed a reorganisation of early tenements which was probably contemporary with these events (Carver 1979). Whether the context was Darlington or Durham, we might suppose that an alteration of the familiar topography of home, commerce and spiritual investment would have a profound effect on the consciousness of the townspeople and their recognition of themselves as subjects of their new overlord.

It remains a basic problem in many of the small towns of Northumberland that we do not understand either the origins or the development of the town. Whilst historical town plan and documentary analysis has proved useful as applied to, for example, Alnwick (Conzen 1960) and Cockermouth on the Cumbrian coast (Winchester 1986), much of the evidence which might inform an understanding of development in smaller towns in the North may only be retrievable through excavation. In his review of the archaeology of medieval towns in Lancashire, White (1996, 125) noted that 'we have not yet defined archaeologically a single burgage plot or a single medieval house site in any Lancashire town.' Here, again, some of the interesting questions which may be asked relate to the differences between seigniorial and monastic boroughs; occupation prior to the granting of charters; and the effects of different authorities on the layout and use of the towns through time.

### **A methodology for future urban research**

In pragmatic terms, due to the great amount of work which has been done there is a definite



need, at this point in time, to produce overviews or syntheses of our state of knowledge of towns in the different counties, identifying the value of archaeological deposits, where assessable. This is best achievable through the urban archaeological strategy projects instigated by English Heritage (1992) as piloted in Durham City (Lowther, Ebbatson, Ellison and Millett 1993); currently embarked upon in Newcastle upon Tyne (Graves and Heslop in prep); and being considered in Carlisle. In the first stage of such projects, all relevant data will be collated and related to a computerised mapping system for the modern town. This will allow archaeologists to map the nature and extent of known deposits; and by extrapolation, the collated data should alert archaeologists to the potential value of deposits which have not been investigated. The second stage will be to write a synthesis of what is known about the development, archaeology and history of the urban centre, but this should also allow archaeologists to ask questions about what we should like to know. The third stage will be the formulation of a strategy for the curation of the archaeological resource. This is surely a tool with which archaeologists can balance conservation with targeted research aims for excavation.

Assessments of small towns (Extensive Urban Surveys), where archaeological interventions have been few in number and often extremely restricted in area, have been undertaken in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, again funded by English Heritage and the local authorities. Further urban surveys may follow. The quality of information which might survive in small towns in the North has been demonstrated in Hartlepool (Daniels 1990 and 1991).

The amount of archaeological work which has been carried out in Northern towns since 1976 ranges enormously: from The Lanes in Carlisle city, perhaps unparalleled in extent anywhere in Britain (McCarthy 1993; McCarthy 1999a; McCarthy forthcoming; Zant in prep.); to, for example, Alnwick, Northumberland, where there has been very little archaeological intervention. There would be little value in reproducing a comprehensive gazetteer of archaeological interventions in the North since 1976; instead, the remainder of this paper will return to the themes suggested at the beginning. Examples will be drawn from the work of the last 20 years to pose questions about the creation of social identity in urban contexts, control, the enfranchisement of urban communities, the

townscape as an arena in which different authoritative claims compete and coalesce.

### Questions and directions for future urban research

There has been very little archaeological research into the walled town of Berwick, with regard to its evolution, or its archaeological potential. What little is known of the early origins of Berwick were stated by Margaret Ellison in her 1976 survey, supplemented by Hunter in 1982 and repeated by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit in January 1996. More detailed research into the area of Marygate has been carried out by the Lancaster Unit in that assessment, including consideration of all the historic cartographic evidence. Since 1996 we have had growing evidence of the depth or quality of deposits underlying a number of parts of Berwick. Hunter carried out some trial trenches at the Ness end, revealing that the waterfront deposits were several metres deep. Given the potential for preservation of organic materials, environmental evidence and the structure of the historic waterfront, the archaeological value of this area is obviously great. Archaeological work carried out at the New Quay in 1996 revealed medieval dumping of domestic rubbish beneath eighteenth century ballast make-up (Griffiths 1999). This potential has been underscored by work carried out between 1998-99, including the location of a possibly maintained communal waste dump (Young 2001). A surface of cobbles was noted c.1m below the present ground surface in the south-east corner of Palace Green.

Further questions may be posed concerning Berwick: what is the relationship of Spades Mire to the town? What date are the defences? According to White (1963) the earthwork antedates the plough rigs and may be thirteenth century in date, possibly before AD 1296. Schofield and Vince (1994, 30, Fig 2.3, after Bond 1987) date these defences to the early thirteenth century, but cite no evidence and give no explanation for this. What did these earthworks enclose? Do they represent an example of shrinkage in the area enclosed?

There is a complex sequence in the foundation of religious houses, their destruction and relocation at Berwick. It may pay to examine the original sites of the religious institutions, where known, prior to the Scots wars, with relation to the early growth of the town; and then to compare this pattern with the development after the wars. There is some dispute as to the identifica-

tion of the Love Lane/Bridge Terrace discoveries (Bishop 1997, 2; Young 2001, 15). Who continues to support these religious houses and hospitals? Those which are mentioned in Dunbar's fifteenth century poem 'The Freiris of Berwik', e.g. the 'Masone Dew', 'Jacobene freiris of the quhyt hew, The Carmeleitis, and the Minouris,' (Mackay Mackenzie 1932, 183); the Domus Dei, and the Dominican Friary – do these all represent renewed interest and patronage on the part of the townspeople after a relative period of stability, and is this distinct from royal patronage of the earlier period? What is the relevance of the positions of the Domus Dei, Domus Pontis and Chapel of Ravensdale on the waterfront, close to the bridge (cf the location of the Domus Dei in Newcastle upon Tyne)? Hospitals, like the Maison Dieu and Domus Dei, were often placed at marginal points of the medieval town, such as bridges and waterfronts; and ports of entry, as a whole, were particularly appropriate locations for the socially and spiritually liminal symbolism of such institutions (Gilchrist 1995, 8–61). The twin foci of the early town of Berwick appear to have been the riverfront and the tollbooth. The important Red Hall – the base for the colony of Flemish merchants in Berwick, remains unlocated; and the White Hall, also probably a merchant hall, was possibly situated in Segate. The social geographies and functions of medieval towns were at once both spiritual and economic. We are surely mistaken in creating a false dichotomy between these considerations in framing both our archaeological research designs and interpretations.

It has been argued that Berwick, in common with other Scottish burghs, had been granted a marketing monopoly over an extended rural hinterland, which had effectively created 'a theoretical economic *contado*' 'unknown in such territorial breadth in the rest of Europe,' (Dennison 1998, 104). Consequently, many questions can be raised as to the relationship between the town and the countryside; and the changes effected by the town's political absorption into England in 1482. How do the various suggestions for the processing of grain either inside (Cotton, Hale and Rutherford 2001, 73), or outside the town (Huntley 1999, 105) fill in this picture, and is there a chronological distinction? Equally valid for consideration is Gidney's conclusion that 'the fisheries of Berwick do not seem to have been as important to the meat supply of the city as the pastoral farmers of the hinterland' (1999, 102).

By contrast, and on a smaller scale, Hartlepool was laid out from the late eleventh century as an enlargement of the two-row green plan seen in the villages of North-East England. The earliest property could 'more readily be equated with rural settlement practice than with urban and is in marked contrast with the contemporary situation in Durham' as suggested by Carver in 1979 (Daniels 1990, 401). Are there other manifestations of rural or hybrid settlement practices in the early occupation of the town? What implications are there for the development of 'urban' practices and identity in this context?

### Land reclamation and urban identity

The medieval waterfront at Newcastle upon Tyne has been examined through excavation at ten sites between the Close Gate in the west (Fraser, Maxwell and Vaughan 1994) and the Swirle in the east (Ellison *et al* 1993). The process of reclamation and development follows a pattern previously recognized at other medieval coastal and riverside towns in Europe, e.g. London; Hull; King's Lynn; Bergen, Norway; Lubeck, northern Germany (Fraser, Jamfrey and Vaughan 1995, 207; O'Brien *et al* 1988, 156; Myrvoll 1991; Fehring 1989). The historical development of trading in Newcastle may be understood in terms of a struggle engaged in by the burgesses of Newcastle to achieve a monopoly on the Tyne in competition with the Priory of Tynemouth and the Bishop of Durham (O'Brien 1991). We need now to try to relate the detail recovered from excavation to those political and economic groups within the town, and the processes by which they asserted their power and identity. The reclamation appears to have progressed piecemeal by a series of revetment walls retaining huge tips of ballast derived from shipping engaged in trade along the eastern and southern English coasts. The earliest date for the beginning of this process has been provisionally identified as the twelfth century, on the Stockbridge Magistrates Court site excavated in 1995 by Lawrence Truman (Truman 1995, 25). O'Brien excavated the area formerly occupied by Fenwick's Entry and Broad Garth. The site of twelfth century pottery manufacture was located at Dog Bank, on a cliff which would have dropped down to the river (O'Brien *et al* 1988). Below this, O'Brien located part of a revetment wall dating to the first half of the thirteenth century, from which quays were built out at right angles, into



the river (1988). A massive episode of dumping occurred which filled the spaces between the quays and created what is presumed to be a continuous platform of raised ground. Streets were laid out over what had been the piers by the end of the thirteenth century. It is unclear whether each of the streets had its own watergate and landing stage before the continuous quayside was created, possibly in the latter half of the fourteenth century.

The waterfront above Tyne Bridge developed as a series of stages with individual properties being enlarged at different rates (Fraser *et al* 1994 and 1995). 'At any one time a common alignment appears to have been rapidly established on adjacent properties, although the only evidence for a cohesive strategy for the waterfront in the medieval period occurs with the construction of the section of the town wall between the Riverside Tower and property 2,' (Fraser *et al* 1995, 207). This occurred in the fifteenth century.

As O'Brien (1991) has pointed out, the town's investment in its riverside infrastructure was considerable, and the quantity and value of maritime trading as far as the Baltic, the Low Countries and France grew enormously from the second half of the thirteenth century. Yet what do we mean by 'the town'? We do not know who was laying out the plots, who was controlling the process of reclamation. The Customs of Newcastle were formulated before the mid-twelfth century and gave the burgesses certain privileges and monopolies (Johnson 1925, 169-79). We might suppose that, in the early years, the borough court, as a focus for communal activity towards the accumulation of capital in excess of the farm they owed to the king was not a sufficient basis on which to embark on a single phase, unified project of reclamation. We do not understand fully the role of the religious institutions in the process either, for the Hospital of the Blessed Virgin Mary certainly leased out land on the Close (Oliver 1924 *passim*). Land transactions gave rights of all land up to the groundbebb of the tide, thereby allowing reclamation on the part of the individual tenant (e.g. a demise of 1288; Oliver 1924, 85-6). The rich would acquire the land, and there would follow subinfeudation, but perhaps the initial piecemeal development reflects the efforts of individuals. The remarkable thing is that there were periodic attempts to create a unified frontage, and that in these we may be seeing the beginnings of communal action and the pooling of capital. It is

surely no coincidence that this begins to happen after the foundation of the merchant guild in 1216 (Howell 1967, 35), and the greater opportunity the guild afforded those burgesses who had specifically mercantile interests to pursue goals of mutual interest with a greater coherence and collective resources. It is from their ranks that bailiffs and the officers of civic government were to arise. I think we must surely see the chronology and form of the waterfront development in terms of the political maturity of these groups. Between 1305 and 1342, there are clear indications that they had formed an elite class within the town (Brand 1789 2, 166; Howell 1967, 38-9). Is it a coincidence, then, that the building of the town wall along the river front, where it would be a visible symbol of the town elite's prestige and unity of purpose to the busy river traffic, occurs after the town has achieved the ultimate recognition of independence and corporate identity, of county status, c.1400? Further, there are a number of issues involving the spiritual aspect of the merchant guild which helped to create at once both the sense of belonging to one group and the distinction of rank amongst the merchants.

This example introduces one of the most exciting possibilities available to archaeologists in the North of England: that is the opportunity to exploit the contrasts that different conditions of lordship in the boroughs afford, and that the different conditions under which urban communities might act and create their own identity afford. For example, how does the process of waterfront reclamation at Hartlepool uncovered by Robin Daniels and his colleagues (Daniels 1991) compare with that described at Newcastle upon Tyne? At Hartlepool, the lordship was held by the Brus family until the fourteenth century wars with Scotland. The pre-dock construction, dock, and sea-defences were constructed between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Brus family encouraged the development of the town, and at the same time built a fabulous church, then encouraged the Franciscans to settle in an impressive friary (Daniels 1986). From the end of the thirteenth century, the Anglo-Scottish wars afforded the merchants of Hartlepool a massive increase in trade as they supplied the English armies. Daniels has said that by the end of the Anglo-Scottish wars the economic impetus within Hartlepool had died out (1991, 50). By the sixteenth century there were large areas of waste within the town's boundaries.

### Victualling and consumption patterns

Two of the themes put forward by the CBA Urban Research Committee (1993) were victualling and the role of the town in stimulating agricultural innovation for a centralised market. In some of the seventeenth-century landfill deposits from the Mansion House site in Newcastle, the animal bone showed signs of selective animal husbandry. This has been taken to be indicative of the agricultural revolution about a hundred years before it is assumed normally (Davis and Bullock 1995, 191, 194-5). What other evidence is there for this, and how might we begin to understand it in terms of the necessity to feed an urban population, and its concomitants in the countryside? Amongst the earliest faunal evidence for selective breeding of this sort are remains from early sixteenth-century deposits in Lincoln (Dobney *et al* 1997). The Newcastle deposits, however, may tie in with documented evidence for early agricultural improvement in large demesne estates in the South-East of Northumberland and North-East of County Durham (Wrathmell 1975, 169-73). Land here was being depopulated and enclosed for the creation of intensive grazing units for both sheep and cattle in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As the population of Tyneside expanded, towns and mining communities could no longer sustain self-sufficiency in food supply. This would have provided a powerful incentive for agrarian change which should be explored in more detail by drawing the documentary, landscape and faunal evidence together.

From here we might explore the idea of market towns dominating their hinterlands, in the distribution of foodstuffs and other items. The potentially significant circumstances of Berwick have been referred to above. The supply of food from the hinterland may be contrasted with the limited evidence for exotic plant taxa which might otherwise be expected from a port (Cotton, Hale and Rutherford 2001, 81; Huntley and Stallibrass 1995). The plentiful salmon fisheries seem to have furnished export rather than local consumption (Gidney and Stokes 2001). In many ways simplistic models of dependency are outmoded. Chris Dyer has suggested that we should be looking, instead, at consumption (1989a and b). Consumption patterns are embedded in the social concerns and practices of different social groups or classes, and not simply reducible to relative wealth. Thus, for example, the aristocracy bought specially imported foodstuffs from the major ports,

and often London, to furnish their lavish feasts. Both unusual food and, for example, costly fabrics, were given as gifts which reinforced relations amongst a broadly conceived group of kin and allies, as well as feudal superiors and patrons. Evidence of this is found plentifully in the Paston and Lisle letters (Davis 1971-6; St Clare Byrne 1981). Following the pattern Dyer has identified elsewhere in England (1989a), the nobility might use basic foodstuffs, and animal fodder or bedding, sent from their own estates as feudal renders whilst staying in the houses they owned in Carlisle or Newcastle upon Tyne. The gentry had different patterns of consumption, and were far more likely to use the provincial capitals and major towns for their supplies. The lower classes, whose mobility was curtailed, tended to rely on local provender.

The process by which so-called trade goods end up in archaeological deposits is therefore complex, and embedded not only in the feudal structure, but will reflect the habits and aspirations of a range of social groups. Changes in the patterning may not simply reflect different trading connections, but the emergence of new dominant classes within different preoccupations. In the North of England, examination of archaeologically retrieved data in conjunction with documentary sources for local areas might be possible in a place like Carlisle where the archaeology has paid careful attention to environmental data, and where there is documentation as well.

Allied to the theme of consumption, Dr Chris Cumberpatch (*pers comm*) has drawn attention to the need to create a review of ceramic material from Cleveland and County Durham, and to establish a type series. Similarly, the ceramics from Berwick need to be put in a context of both Scottish as well as Northern English types (*cf.* Jenner 1999, 83). Within Newcastle, the advent of imported redware vessels begins as a slow trickle in the fourteenth century but steadily increases through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in inverse proportion to the use of locally-produced reduced greenwares (Ellison 1981, particularly 96, Fig 6). This phenomenon needs to be examined in conjunction with the advent of other imported domestic items and forms of building material, for example Low Countries brick and tile. I would suggest that the chronology and quantity of such imports runs concurrently with the growth in export of coal to the Low Countries from the late fourteenth century (*cf.* O'Brien 1991). As Newcastle merchants created these contacts, is there enough evidence to



suggest that the consumption choices of the merchant elite here indicate that they were developing a similar lifestyle, sharing the same material preferences, to their counterparts in other ports around the North Sea rim? Gaimster and Nenke (1997, 172) have argued for a 'Hanseatic' material culture and lifestyle as applicable to London, Norwich and Southampton. Newcastle was a major North Sea port but the same questions have not been asked of the archaeology and social history here. Moreover, I would warn against the kind of analysis that seeks either direct parallels for the patterns found in the South of England, or assigns a 'poor cousin' interpretation to the evidence should it prove that assemblages from Newcastle do not match the full range and quality of imports found in the South. Rather, if the Hanseatic culture is viewed (or theorized) as a range of choices, then the consumption and lifestyle preferences of a North country urban elite may reflect particular assimilations, selections and innovations through which they created their own distinct regional identity, or variation on the general theme.

### Towns and innovation

The Council for British Archaeology recommends the analysis of the town as the centre or conduit of innovation, of, for example, technological innovation. The role that Tyneside was to play in the industrialization of the North should alert us to early manifestations of technological change, or manufacturing specialization. What role did late medieval religious institutions play in developing the industrial processes, particularly mineral exploitation, of the North? How did this affect urban markets and the creation of wage-labour dependency?

I would also suggest that we need to think about the role of towns as centres for the production and dissemination of texts in the course of the later middle ages, and of particular kinds of knowledge. We might consider this in respect of the painted wooden Augustine screens in Carlisle Cathedral. These screens carry images and texts of the legends of Saints Augustine, Cuthbert and Anthony written in contemporary Cumbrian dialect English, dating to the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Both the range of images and textual quotations were carefully selected by the Bishop of Carlisle, formerly a monk of Durham Cathedral Priory. They are fixtures in a public place of worship, and surely a significant contrast and counter to the proliferation of individual aids to contemplation which

we understand to have circulated amongst an increasingly literate urban population, and those members of the urban elite who left the town to live on rural estates. These were the same people, often, who used private chapels on their estates and sat in screened family chapels or pews in their parish churches. These people developed a more individualistic spirituality than the majority of their humbler contemporaries: the kind of privatized religion which accompanied the privatization of domestic space (Graves 1996, and 2000; Richmond 1984). Of what date, and what nature, are the earliest printed products from Northern towns; who controlled their content and dissemination; and what audience did they address?

### Urban space and social reproduction

This brings me back to the theme of the way in which urban space was inhabited and how social groups were reproduced. We can ask questions of the spatial distribution of crafts and trades, of different types of building. Daniels' work on the use of space in medieval Hartlepool burghage plots is one of the best examples of more than just a theoretical application of this approach (Daniels 1990). This is one area where we can make a virtue of the restrictions of PPG16 and make more of standing buildings, of cartographic, pictorial and documentary sources. Issues such as privacy, household, gender and age relations may be explored through existing structures and excavation archive (cf. Johnson 1993; Johnson 1996 *passim*; Grenville 1997). We can move on from here in townscape terms to think about who occupied waste and derelict properties, for example. In Carlisle, as in Newcastle upon Tyne, we find felons, foreigners, 'Scots and Unfreemen', established in the tails of much-divided burghage plots, squatting or camping out on commons (for antipathies to such people see, e.g. Bourne 1736, 50; Howell 1967, 97-8 and *passim*). Newcastle has produced fascinating evidence for the spatial patterning of non-regulated crafts and occupations in the sixteenth century (Vaughan 1981, 189; Nolan 1990), and such themes should be explored further.

Work of outstanding quality has, of course, been carried out on the church of the North of England, and needs no repetition here. However, we might think about using this information in terms of the creation of Christian identities: would the way in which ecclesiastical spaces could be used differ substantially between the two dioceses of Durham and Carlisle, or from



parish to parish? There may certainly be a difference between Berwick, prior to 1482, and Newcastle: 'Scottish towns, unlike their English and most continental counterparts, did not house multiple parishes,' (Dennison 1998, 112-3). Newcastle, as noted above, had four churches which were regarded, through popular practice, as parish churches. What effects did this have on patterns of patronage, burial, the idea of an urban 'community' and social differentiation?

We might think about the way in which urban communities formed themselves. In the emergence of the craft guilds we find a plethora of powerful groups. They built not only public buildings like guildhalls as expressions of their wealth and taste, but individual company halls. The dynamics of the guilds in a town like Newcastle are fascinating as, for example, the hostmen gained a monopoly of the coal trade, and then political ascendancy. The reuse of the claustral ranges of the Dominican Friary by trade companies after the Dissolution of the Monasteries has been researched by Harbottle and Fraser (1987). The situation can be contrasted with that in Durham where, unusually, it was the bishop who indirectly controlled craft membership, and upheld standards of manufacture, and where it was the bishop's temporal chancellor who was responsible for craft and trade company discipline (Bonney 1990). There were no craft halls in Durham, and no recognizably distinct forms of housing created by a wealthy merchant group.

What can we learn from the role of the craft guilds in the Corpus Christi procession and plays in Northern English towns? In Newcastle, the numerous craft guilds and the Merchant Adventurers company were extremely influential and were responsible for the organization of both the Corpus Christi procession and plays, and other frequent public entertainments and ceremonies (Anderson 1982). By contrast, in Durham, the Corpus Christi procession seems to have been much more of a merger of craft and clerical interests (Rubin 1991, 260; 268; Fowler 1902, 107). M R James (1983) and Charles Phythian-Adams (1972) have written of the way in which the commercial success of each craft determined its role in the hierarchy of the procession, and that, consequently, processional order could change from year to year, determined not by an unchanging conception of the world, but by success in a competitive commercial market. These processions were believed to present an image of the *community* of the town,

but this was a partial and exclusive image. We can ask, similarly, who controlled the cycle of religious drama in Northern towns: clerics or guildsmen? How did this affect perceptions of public and commercial space, or perceptions of commercial practice itself? Matters of jurisdiction and economics were often played out in the public ritual occupation of space and lay at the heart of both spiritual and civic identities (Fleming 2000; Graves 2000). These themes are brought together in a current project that explores the role of civic ceremonial and the form and distribution of seventeenth-century timber-framed buildings in Newcastle (Graves, Heslop and Taylor in prep). This demonstrates that the form of such buildings is not merely a reflection of architectural fashion as diffused to the provinces, but, rather, a factor in the creation of particular social and political relationships in the town at that date.

Finally, at the launch of the Society for Church Archaeology in 1996, Richard Morris suggested that the Reformation marked one of the most defining moments in the history of England, Scotland and Wales, effecting the change from a medieval, organic concept of society, to an atomized, early modern society dominated by the concept of individualism. In the context of the launch, Morris suggested that we should, perhaps, be looking at churches as the locus of this change. I would contend that in urban studies we have tended to underplay the manifestations of religion and spiritual concerns in, for example, commercial practice in the later middle ages. I would suggest that we do not benefit by either this separation of religion from economics and trade, or the medieval : post-medieval period division. Rather, there is much to be gained by taking account of a broad period of transition. This is the view taken by the Societies for Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology in both their *Age of Transition* (November 1996; Gaimster and Stamper 1997) and *Archaeology of Reformation* (February 2001) conferences. I would end this consideration of the directions in which we might take the archaeological analysis of Northern towns with an appeal that we should apply modern theoretical rigour to the themes developed by Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930 translation; 1985 edition) and R H Tawney in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1922; 1984 edition).